Classic Fairy Tales

Cinderella

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A long time ago there lived a gentleman and his charming wife, who took great pride in raising their only daughter to be a good and well-behaved girl. The child was most obedient and loved her parents dearly.

Sadly, after a long illness, the little girl's mother died. Father and daughter were heart-broken for a very long time.

Many years later, when his daughter reached her fourteenth birthday, the father married once again. He had

longed for a new bride to help care for his beloved daughter. His second wife, however, was unfortunately quite different to the first. She was lazy, grumpy, no-one could please her, and she had two grown-up daughters of a similar nature.

Minutes after the wedding was over, the new wife began to show her temper. She could not bear her husband's beautiful daughter, who seemed like an angel compared with her own children. Within days the new wife ordered her stepdaughter to

sleep in the cellar so that her own daughters had a bedroom of their own.

The stepmother made the young girl wash all the dishes, polish the tables and chairs, sweep the floor, and make the beds. But the worst job of all was sweeping the fireplace. Every day the little girl was covered in cinders, and she soon became known as 'Cinderella'. But poor Cinderella followed her orders without complaint, fearing her father would be scolded himself

– it had become quite clear that his new wife ruled the house!

One day, it so happened that Cinderella's grumpy stepsisters were invited to a grand ball at the royal palace. The girls were busy preparing for the event; every moment was spent deciding which gown and shoes they should wear. Such excitement meant more work for Cinderella, though, as she was forced to iron their dresses and fix their hair. The stepsisters talked of nothing but their appearance: "I," said

the eldest, "will look simply stunning in my scarlet velvet dress." "And I," said the youngest, "will look marvellous in my gold muslin wrap and with diamonds in my hair!"

On the morning of the ball the stepsisters called to Cinderella for her opinion of their dresses, for the girls knew she had a great deal of wisdom in these matters. Cinderella gave them the best advice she could, and even adjusted their head-dresses.

But while Cinderella was busy dressing her sisters, they said to her, snickering, "Would you not like to go to the ball, Cinders?" Cinderella knew they were laughing at her, as she was still covered in dust and dirt from the morning's chores.

Now most girls would take their revenge and mess up the sisters' hair, or tear their dress, but not Cinderella. The sweet-natured girl simply chose to ignore them.

As the stepsisters drove off to the ball in their beautiful

horse-drawn carriage, Cinderella followed them with her eyes. When they were out of sight, she sat down and began to cry.

To Cinderella's surprise, her fairy godmother appeared. Now her fairy godmother had appeared only once before – when Cinderella's mother had died. "Tell me, dear," said the fairy godmother, "what troubles you so?"

"I wish, I wish," sobbed Cinderella, "I wish I could go to the ball!"

"Well, as you are such a good girl," said the fairy godmother, "you shall go! Now run into the garden and bring me a pumpkin."

Cinderella flew like lightning, and brought the finest pumpkin she could find. Her godmother scooped out the inside, then she struck it with her wand and the pumpkin instantly turned into a golden coach.

Next the fairy godmother sent Cinderella outside to

find seven field mice. Cinderella did as she was told, and the godmother touched each mouse with her wand – six of the mice turned into beautiful white horses, while the seventh turned into a driver for the coach!

The fairy godmother then said to Cinderella, "Well, my dear, is this not the finest coach, with the finest horses, and the finest driver to take you to the finest ball? Are you not delighted?"

"Yes," replied Cinderella, "but must I wear these filthy rags?"

The fairy godmother touched Cinderella with the wand, and her rags became a stunning gown.

Cinderella looked perfect. She had a beautiful jewelled necklace and bracelet, and she wore the most dainty glass slippers. The fairy godmother gave Cinderella strict instructions before letting her go to the ball: "No matter what happens,

you must leave the palace by the time the clock strikes twelve. Should you stay a single minute longer, the coach will once again become a pumpkin, the horses will become mice and the fine clothes will be changed back into filthy rags."

Cinderella promised to do exactly as she was told, and off she went to the ball.

When Cinderella arrived, everyone at the palace was amazed at her beauty. The dancing and the music stopped, and

everybody stared at this beautiful stranger. The Prince came forward, led her into the ballroom, and begged her to dance with him throughout the evening!

The King and Queen particularly admired Cinderella's elegance and great manners. As for the Prince, he soon discovered that Cinderella was as kind and good as she was beautiful, and he knew that she was the girl for him. As the evening wore on, a fine feast was served. But the Prince was

so busy gazing at Cinderella, he did not eat a bite.

Cinderella seated herself near her sisters, paid them much attention, and offered them some of the treats the Prince had given her. The sisters were quite astonished at such fine manners from a lady whom they did not know (or so they thought!).

All too soon, this wonderful evening was to come to an end for poor Cinderella. While dancing with the Prince, she

heard the clock striking twelve. Cinderella almost flew out of the ballroom. The Prince followed quickly behind, but he could not catch her. After searching high and low throughout the palace gardens, the Prince had found nothing but one of her little glass slippers.

As she passed through the palace gates, poor Cinderella was once again wearing her ragged old dress, and she had to walk all the way home.

When Cinderella's sisters returned, they teased her with glowing stories of the ball. They told her of a beautiful and mysterious guest, and how she had dropped a tiny glass slipper that the Prince had picked up, announcing to everyone that if he could find the owner of the slipper he would marry her!

The next day a royal messenger took the slipper to all the homes in the land. When he arrived at Cinderella's house

her two sisters tried to force the slipper on, but it was no use. The sisters' feet were far too big! Then, Cinderella slowly stepped forward, "May I try the slipper, sir?"

The stepsisters roared with laughter, "You? You? Why you never even went to the ball, silly girl!"

Cinderella ignored her nasty sisters and held out her foot. The moment the royal messenger saw Cinderella's tiny and delicate foot, he knew the slipper would fit. The two sisters

were amazed! They were even more amazed when Cinderella pulled out the other slipper from her pocket!

At that very moment, Cinderella's fairy godmother appeared. She touched Cinderella's ragged clothes with her magic wand, making her appear as magnificently dressed as the night before.

The two sisters finally realized that their very own stepsister, Cinderella, was in fact the mysterious guest from the

ball. They threw themselves at her feet, begging for forgiveness for the terrible way they had treated Cinderella. Being such a caring and good girl, Cinderella hugged her sisters, and said that she forgave them.

It was time for the hugs and tears to end, as the royal messenger insisted that Cinderella return with him to the palace. Cinderella and the Prince were reunited, and they couldn't take their eyes off each other.

The most beautiful wedding in the land took place a few days later, with Cinderella's proud father and stepsisters at her side. Even her evil stepmother managed a smile!

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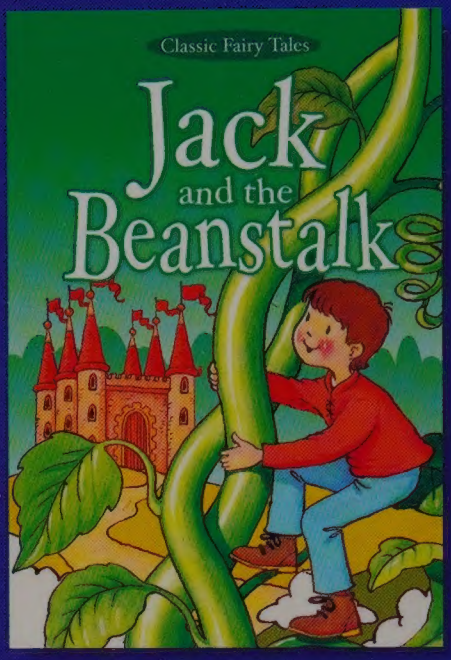

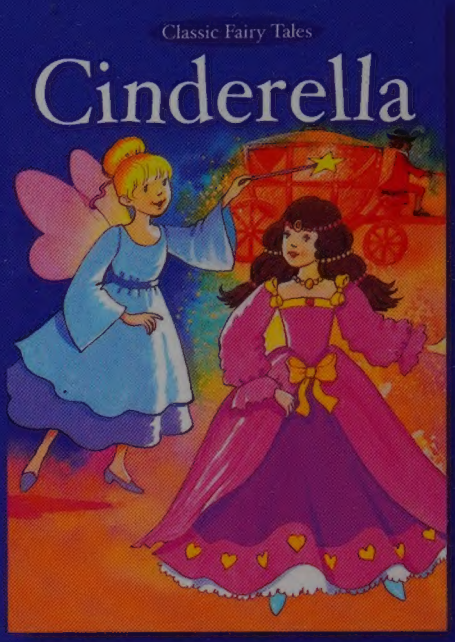

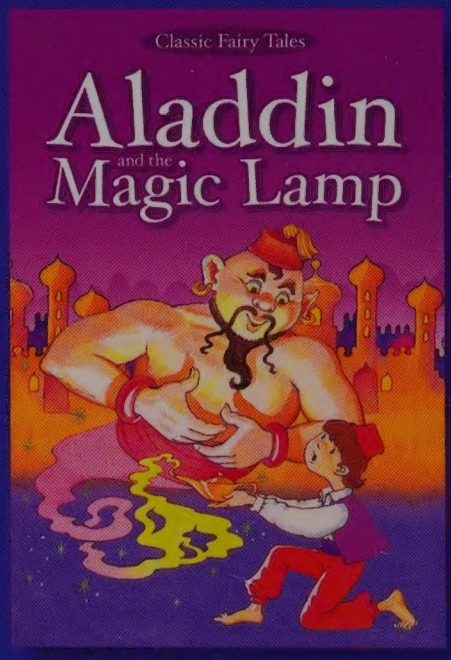

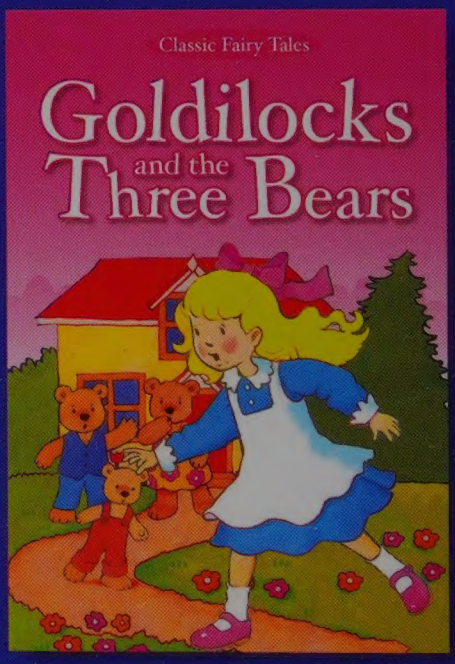

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